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Summer Field Report, June-July 2004

W. Ross Silcock

Nebraska Ornithological Union, silcock@rosssilcock.com

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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2004

compiled by W. Ross Silcock

P.O. Box 57, Tabor, IA 51653

silcock@rosssilcock.com

INTRODUCTION

The coverage of the state by observers who report their sightings, mostly to the listserv NEBirds, is very good relative to their rather low number. Even so, there are parts of the state that are only recently revealing their secrets. Extensive work in the Panhandle in the late 1990s, including mist-netting by Steve Dinsmore, showed that several western species are regular migrants through that part of the state, and similar extensive coverage of waterbirds and shorebirds at L McConaughy yielded similar valuable information, following the pioneering efforts there by Dick Rosche. This report contains many references to another interesting area only now being covered seriously, the cedar canyons of southeast Lincoln Co. T.J. Walker has come up with many interesting findings of nesting and resident birds that can be read here.

Perplexing to many are the changes in Canada Goose taxonomy; simply put, as far as Nebraska is concerned, the small ones (Mallard-sized, small bills, short necks) are now "Cackling Goose", *Branta hutchinsii*, and virtually all of the others are "Canada Goose" *B. canadensis*. As is often the case with taxonomy, the devil is in the details, but we won't get into those here! There are many good discussions of the topic at various internet sites.

Most of the exciting news this summer was to do with shorebirds, including stilts, plovers, and the rest. Black-necked Stilts are expanding their numbers and breeding range significantly in western Nebraska, with several instances of breeding and high numbers reported. The dry-down of L McConaughy, a rather spectacular phenomenon, has provided huge expanses of seemingly perfect breeding habitat for Snowy and Piping Plovers. Very large numbers of these birds were encountered, with correspondingly large numbers of nests found. Intriguingly large counts of Marbled Godwits in June suggest nesting failure in the breeding range located essentially north of Nebraska, but some observers are wondering whether breeding occurred within the state. Little or no firm evidence was provided, however, and there are still fewer than 5 breeding records for the state.

Another surprising shorebird phenomenon this summer was the number of species reported in mid-to-late June, the short window of time when migratory shorebirds can be expected to be absent. Based on the rather scanty information provided on plumages, most of the birds probably did not complete migration, stopping to summer at the excellent available habitat primarily at Harlan Co Res and L McConaughy. Other unexpected records in this same time period were of Franklin's and Bonaparte's Gulls, both of which are usually absent for a short while in late June. Also surprising was the first mid-summer report of an adult Herring Gull, usually absent from about Mar-Oct. Whether these summering shorebirds and the large counts of Marbled Godwit in the state at about the same time are related is a matter for conjecture.

Observers of hummingbirds in the Panhandle also pointed out the scarcity of these birds; only 2 birds of 2 species were reported, far fewer than usual. The lower numbers of hummers in much of the western Great Plains the last year or two has been attributed to the effect of dry conditions on breeding success. This has also been floated as a reason for the very low chickadee numbers in parts of Nebraska recently.

Notably early were a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Wilson's Warbler in Sioux Co, both first July records for the state. There were few real rarities; summer is a time when the best sightings tend to be of range expansions or contractions and unexpected appearances of otherwise common species. Best birds were Red-throated Loon, Laughing Gull, Lesser and Great Black-backed Gulls, and a Scott's Oriole.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BBS: Breeding Bird Survey; BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co; Cem: Cemetery; CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; CRP: Conservation Reserve Program (USDA); FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha/Richardson Cos; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co; m.ob.: many observers; MRET: Missouri River Ecology Trail, Neale Woods, Washington Co; NC: Nature Center; NF: National Forest; NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks; NM: National Monument; NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co; Res: Reservoir; eRWB: eastern Rainwater Basin, south central and southeast Nebraska; SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co; SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; SRA: State Recreation Area; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area; WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Kiowa WMA: Scotts Bluff Co; L Minatare: Scotts Bluff Co; Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co; Niobrara Marsh: Knox Co; Old Stage Hill Road: Scotts Bluff Co; Ponca SP: Dixon Co; Schramm SP: Sarpy Co; Smith L WMA: Sheridan Co; Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co; Wildcat Hills NC: Scotts Bluff-Banner Cos.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering; ARy: Allen Reyer, Bellevue; AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney; BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City; BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue; BW: Bruce Walgren, Casper, WY; CC: Carol Carpenter, Verdon; CD: Chuck Dummer, Kearney; CHy: Carr Heaney, Omaha; CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue; CR: Carolyn Rieke, Lincoln; DB: Duane Bright, Omaha; DC: David Chaffin, Cleveland, TN; DP: Don Paseka, Ames; DSt: Dave Stage, Lincoln; DW: Donna Walgren, Casper, WY; EB: Elliot Bedows, Omaha; GB: Greg Butcher, Brookfield, WI; GH: Glen Hoge, Alma; HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell; JA: Jerry Allen, Gretna; JC: Jamalee Clark, Gering; JD: John Dinan, Lincoln; JED: James E. Ducey, Omaha; JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair; JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield; JK: Jim Kovanda, Omaha; JO: Jerry Oldenettel, Socorro, NM; JP: Jan Paseka, Ames; JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha; JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha; JWH: John W. Hall, Omaha; KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue; KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell; KN: Kay Niyo, Evergreen, CO; KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln; LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln; LFr: Lonnie Frimann, Scottsbluff; LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue; LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon; MA: Mark Armstrong, Omaha; MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton; MUS: Moni Usasz, Lincoln; NP: Neva Pruess, Lincoln; PEL: Paul E. Lehman, Cape May, NJ; RE: Rick Eades, Lincoln; RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue; RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon; SA: Sue Amiotte, Chadron; SJ: Stephen Jones, Boulder, CO; SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Starkville, MS; SK: Sandy Kovanda, Omaha; TEL: Thomas E. Labedz,

Lincoln; TH: Thomas Hoffman, Omaha; TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady; WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma; WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: Two stragglers were reported, about average, one each at HCR 22 Jun - 25 Jul (GH,WH) and in the eRWB 31 Jul (JGJ).

Snow Goose: About 11 were reported around the state, usual for mid-summer.

Canada Goose: Best summering count was the 320 at BOL 27 Jun (LE).

Cackling Goose: A small goose identified as a *hutchinsii*, now considered a species separate from larger forms (see Introduction, above), remained through the period at Clay County Wetland 32 (JGJ), for an apparent first summer record. More such records might be expected, however, as this small pale-breasted Arctic goose regularly migrates through central and eastern Nebraska, occurring in concentrations in the Rainwater Basin in spring.

Trumpeter Swan: One was on a nest near Merriman 9 Jun (CNK), the only report.

Wood Duck: Broods were noted 2 Jun - 27 Jul (PEL,LR,RH) as expected.

Gadwall: Best count was 35 at LM 19 Jun (SJD).

American Wigeon: Uncommon in mid-summer away from the fairly restricted breeding range were 4-8 at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN) and especially a single at HCR 27 Jun (GH,WH).

Mallard: Best count was 260 at LM 20 Jun (SJD).

Blue-winged Teal: First broods reported were 3 in Lincoln Co 2 Jun (TJW). Best count was 231 at LM 19 Jun (SJD).

Cinnamon Teal: Best count was not at the usual location, Kiowa WMA, but at LM, where 6 were found 20 Jun, including 2 pairs (SJD,WRS,KN). A little out of range and rather late at a presumably non-breeding location was one at HCR 11 Jun (GH,WH). No broods were reported.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Canvasback: The only report was of a female at LO 19 Jun (SJD); mid-summer sightings away from the breeding range are few.

Redhead: Continuing a trend seen in recent summers, small numbers were noted away from breeding locations. At Alma 2-6 summered on the East SL (GH,WH), and 17 were at LM and LO 19 Jun (SJD). One in the eRWB 26 Jun increased to 12 by 31 Jul (JGJ). The only brood reported was in Sheridan Co 5 Jul (JGJ).

Lesser Scaup: A female remained at Alma SL through 27 Jun (GH,WH); mid-summer reports away from breeding areas are few.

Hooded Merganser: In recent years summering immatures have become normal; this summer about 18 were reported, most westerly the 6 at LO 17 Jun (JSt).

Red-breasted Merganser: A surprise was one at HCR 20 Jun (SJD), only the 2nd ever recorded for Jun.

Ruddy Duck: Unexpected was a male at Alma East SL 25-27 Jun (GH,WH), and 6 at Fairmont SL 26 Jun (JGJ) were also a surprise. Breeding may occur anywhere in the state, however.

Chukar: Again a few birds, 1-4, were seen at BOL 12-28 Jun (LE,KP); these are presumably birds released for dog training.

Gray Partridge: The only report was of one just northwest of Wakefield 16 Jun, the first in the area for 5 years (JJ).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Five young were seen near Gering 30 Jun (AK).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Routine reports.

Wild Turkey: A group of 37 “unemployed” toms and jakes was in southwest Lincoln Co 26 Jul (TJW); hopefully before they received their pink slips the objects of their desire were happily broody.

Northern Bobwhite: This species is resident at Smith L WMA (SJ), possibly its northwesternmost regular location.

Red-throated Loon: The bird reported in Spring at L Minatare remained through 2 Jun, when it was mostly in alternate plumage (PEL,JO); this was Nebraska’s 4th spring record.

Common Loon: The only one reported was a basic-plumaged bird at LO 19-20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN).

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Eared Grebe: Good counts were the 108 at Bunger L, Sheridan Co, 9 Jun (CNK) and the 85 nest mounds at White L, Sheridan Co, 7 Jul (JGJ). The status of one at LO 19 Jun (SJD) was difficult to categorize; breeding is not known there, but one at Alma SL 2 Jun (GH,WH) was a late migrant.

Western Grebe: Best count was 1715 at LM 19 Jun (SJD), many of these are likely immatures, but breeding occurs there.

Clark’s Grebe: Up to 7 were at LM through 20 Jun (m.ob.), typical for this location.

American White Pelican: There was some interest in numbers present this summer because of the surprising and unexplained abandonment of eggs and chicks in late May and early Jun by virtually all of the 27,000 or so adult birds at Chase Lake NWR, North Dakota, North America’s largest breeding colony. Prior to this summer, during Jun-Jul there were only 2 counts over 100 of pelicans in Nebraska. This summer, there were several, totaling about 1000; these seem likely to have come from Chase Lake. Best was the 350-400 in Platte Co 19 Jun (TJW). Others were 100+ circling over Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 6 Jun (CNK), 140 at BOL 12 Jun (LE), 166 flying over Scotia 13 Jun (LR,RH), 123 at HCR 20 Jun (SJD) and through Jul (GH,WH), and 100 over Genoa 19 Jun (TJW).

Brown Pelican: One appeared at HCR 20 Jun (SJD, photo) and remained with a group of about 15 American White Pelicans through 10 Jul (LR,RH). This is the 6th documented record for Nebraska, all in the period 12 May-10 Jul.

Double-crested Cormorant: Rare eastward in mid-summer, 2 were at Walnut Creek Res, Sarpy Co, 27 Jun (CHy) and 8 were at BOL the same day (LE).

American Bittern: Best count was 5 in the eRWB 26 Jun (JGJ); this species summers regularly there, although nesting has not been confirmed for several years (Jorgensen, <http://rip.physics.unk.edu/NOU/eRWBbirdlistJGJPDF.pdf>).

Great Blue Heron: A rookery with 30+ nests was found just south of Valentine NWR, Cherry Co, 9 Jun (CNK).

Great Egret: Few were reported, best count only 14, those in the eRWB 31 Jul (JGJ).

Snowy Egret: The only report was of one in southeast Cherry Co 29 Jun (JED); a few appear during Jun-Jul.

Cattle Egret: As with Great Egret, best counts were in late Jul; 113 were at a Clay Co wetland 31 Jul (JGJ). Few others were reported, although “a bunch” were in southeast Cherry Co 29 Jun (JED).

Green Heron: Several sightings of 1-2 along the Platte River in Lincoln Co during the summer (TJW) were somewhat westerly. There are no breeding records in the Platte Valley west of Lincoln Co.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Best count was 6 roosting near Burwell 18 Jun (MUs).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: The only report was of a 1st-year bird in Creighton 9 Jun (fide MB); this is the first Knox Co record since 1986 (fide MB), and only the 3rd for northern Nebraska, all in spring.

White-faced Ibis: Numbers were good in the Sandhills, with 3 observers using words like “abound” (JED), “many, likely breeding several sites” (JGJ), and “lots” (JT); reports were from Cherry, Sheridan, and Garden Cos. The only other report was of an adult at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster Co, 12 Jun (LE); this species is uncommon in the east.

Turkey Vulture: Routine reports.

Osprey: One at the North Platte Fish Hatchery 23 Jul (TJW) was rather early; reports in the period 11 Jun - 7 Aug are few. This species is not known to breed in the state currently.

Mississippi Kite: None were reported, although birds had been seen in Ogallala, the only known breeding site, in spring.

Bald Eagle: Two adults were near the North Platte airport 25 Jun, in the area where a nest had blown down in late May (TJW). Two adults were at Swan L, Cherry Co, 8 Jun; it was unknown if they were nesting in the area (CNK). A surprise was an immature at HCR 17 Jul (GH,WH); perhaps it had fledged in the area in the last couple of years.

Northern Harrier: An unusually dark bird was seen in Harlan Co 25 Jul: head, back, and throat were “almost coal black”, but white rump patch was present (GH,WH). Perhaps this bird was an exceptionally dark, recently-fledged juvenile; Wheeler (*Raptors of Western North America*, 2003) mentions only 2 melanistic birds, both adults, neither of which had white rumps.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Singles in Nemaha Co 13 Jun (JSt) and Otoe Co 20 Jun (LF,CF) were rather late; there is a surprising number of Jun reports (20+) from southeast Nebraska, raising the possibility of confusion with small male Cooper's Hawks, although there are old records of breeding in the southeast by Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Cooper's Hawk: An adult with two fluffy chicks in a nest was discovered at SCP 26 Jun (KP).

Red-shouldered Hawk: None were reported; following only one FF sighting in Feb and one in Apr (only recently reported), it appears that only a single bird was present then and no summering pair resulted.

Broad-winged Hawk: The only report was of one at FF 31 Jul (CNK,GB), somewhat early for a migrant; one was reported there in Apr, but none in the interim.

Swainson's Hawk: Easternmost was one near Ames 18 Jul (DP,JP); this species is uncommon in the east.

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: Routine reports.

Golden Eagle: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Prairie Falcon: Garden Co has few suitable breeding sites for this species north of the Platte River Valley, and breeding has not been reported there; a single bird north of CLNWR 12 Jul (JT) may have been a non-breeder.

Peregrine Falcon: A pair was in attendance at the State Capitol in Lincoln, but nesting did not occur; both the male and female were banded but it was not possible to determine whether they were the same pair that was present last year (JD). In Omaha, Zeus, the male, was present for his 9th consecutive year and Amelia was present for her fifth year; they produced 3 young (JD).

Virginia Rail: The only report of breeding was the sighting of 2 adults with 2 fluffy

young along White Horse Creek, Lincoln Co, 9 Jun (TJW). Other sightings included 4 birds at Pawnee Creek, Lincoln Co, 27 Jun (LR,RH), one near North Loup 4 Jul (LR,RH), and a belated sighting of one at Sinninger Basin, York Co, 5 Jul 2003 (LR,RH). This species is "perhaps a casual breeder" in the RWB (Jorgensen-URL cited above).

Sora: None were reported.

American Coot: An adult with a chick was at Chilibaba Ponds, Scotts Bluff Co, 13 Jun, and another with 7 young was there 17 Jul (KD). This wetland mitigation pond is providing good waterbird habitat. Drier conditions this year reduced numbers at Moger WPA, Clay Co; only 3 birds were there 26 Jun compared to 6+ breeding pairs last summer (JGJ).

Sandhill Crane: An apparent cripple which had been near Gibbon since spring was seen 17 Jul (LR,RH). Very interesting information was received from Sioux Co (fide AK) indicating that a pair of Sandhill Cranes raised 2 young in 2003; the rancher, Larry Wickersham, said that a pair was there in 2002, but he saw no young. They raised 2 young in 2003 and came back in 2004, but left in Jun because of the very dry conditions and lack of water. Larry said that the odd sounds made by the cranes "spooked his horses". The birds in 2003 bred on a neighboring ranch but foraged in meadow and meadow stubble in 2003, accompanied by their young.

American Golden-Plover: None were reported; early dates, presumably adults, are in mid-Jul, but adults are not expected in fall.

Snowy Plover: Very exciting was the major increase in numbers of breeding birds this summer at 2 major reservoirs where drought conditions and irrigation draw-down exposed extensive sandy flats. As many as 20+ individuals and 10 nests were located at LM this summer and 19 chicks fledged (Gabe Wilson, fide SJD); on 19 Jun 10 males and 4 females, a nest with 3 eggs, and a brood were found there (SJD). The second location, HCR, had 2 pairs, each with a "very fresh brood", 20 Jun (SJD).

Semipalmated Plover: Apparent late spring migrants were 2-3 at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD); this is the latest of 9 Jun dates for this species. First for fall were 3 in Lincoln 24 Jul (LE).

Piping Plover: Incredible record numbers were at LM this summer: 360+ individuals and 182 nests were found and 371 chicks fledged (Gabe Wilson,SJD). As might be expected, nesting was taking place at HCR also; 5 broods were there 20 Jun (SJD). The first Panhandle breeding record for this species, made possible because of drought-induced low water levels, was L Minatare, where 2 birds had a nest 19 Jun (SJD). A southeast Saunders Co gravel operation provides breeding habitat each summer; at least one brood was noted there 19 and 29 Jun (CNK,ARy).

Killdeer: Best count was a moderate 76 at LM 19 Jun (SJD).

Mountain Plover: None were reported.

Black-necked Stilt: This species is increasing in numbers rapidly in the western Sandhills; detailed data were provided by JGJ of sightings of about 55 individuals and about 8 breeding pairs, 6 confirmed with chicks, at several wetlands in Sheridan and Garden Cos 3-5 Jul. Additional sightings were of 17 at Lakeside 5 Jun (JED) and 2 near Smith L WMA 9 Jun (CNK). Breeding also occurred again at County Road F Pond, near Kiowa WMA, where 2 pairs were nesting and at least one brood resulted (KD,PEL,JO,AK). This pond is another Scotts Bluff Co wetland mitigation pond that is having immediate success as a breeding location for waterbirds.

American Avocet: At least 50 adults were at the County Road F Pond, Scotts Bluff

Co, during the period (KD); “dozens” were on nests and at least 7 broods were counted (KD,AK). All had departed the area by 28 Jul (KD). Along with the large numbers of Black-necked Stilts in the western Sandhills, large numbers of avocets were present, including 300 and at least one nest at Schoonover L, northwest Garden Co, 5 Jul (JGJ). At LM, a nest was located 19 Jun, along with 42 adults (SJD); this appears to be the first confirmed nesting there.

Greater Yellowlegs: First were 2 at HCR 22 Jun (GH,WH), about on schedule for fall arrival.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Separating spring and fall migrants is difficult; some birds probably do not complete migration, such as one at HCR 13 Jun (GH,WH). This and another, possibly an early fall migrant, were there 20 Jun (SJD). Presumably fall migrants based on the numbers were 7 in the eRWB (JGJ) and 7 in Cherry Co (JED) on 26 Jun, and late spring migrants were 3 at Sinniger Basin, Clay Co, 12 Jun (LR,RH).

Solitary Sandpiper: First for fall was one rather early in Seward Co 27 Jun (LE).

Willet: A good count was 60 in southern Sheridan Co 14 Jun (JED). Two at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD) may have been early fall migrants.

Spotted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Upland Sandpiper: Good numbers were evident in the breeding range, with 40 in Platte River meadows in Lincoln Co 21 Jun (TJW), and it was “pleasantly ubiquitous” in Sheridan and Garden Cos 4 Jul (JGJ). An adult with 3 young was near North Loup 4 Jul (LR,RH).

Long-billed Curlew: A few breed as far west as Scotts Bluff and Banner Cos; 4 were just north of the county line 17 Jun (AK). An excellent tally was the 200 scattered among potholes north of CLNWR 12 Jul (JT); such aggregations form prior to the fall exodus. An early fall migrant was at HCR 20 Jun (SJD).

Marbled Godwit: This species may have suffered a serious setback in breeding within its normal range to the north of Nebraska this year, as large numbers appeared in Nebraska beginning with 5 north of CLNWR 9 Jun (CNK), 18 in southern Sheridan Co 14 Jun (JED), and peaking at an amazing 186 at LM 20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN), by far a record count. Previous high counts have been in Jul and Aug. Appearance at these dates might suggest breeding, but the evidence remains circumstantial only. A rancher “on the vast meadow flat” north of Lakeside indicated that “short-billed curlews” had bred there “for decades” (fide JED), but there is no confirmation of this. Marbled Godwit is not known to breed regularly in Nebraska. A belated report was of a pair 7 miles south of Smith L WMA in early Jun 2003 that was aggressively territorial, attacking the observer, and present at the same spot 4 weeks earlier (SJ); they were not observed this year.

Sanderling: None were reported; early dates are in late Jul.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Likely late spring migrants were 3 at LM 19 Jun (SJD), the latest spring date. However, the earliest fall date is 25 Jun, suggesting that such mid-Jun records are of birds which have not undergone a complete migration.

Western Sandpiper: None were reported; early dates are in late Jul.

Least Sandpiper: The 1-3 at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD) and one at HCR 20 Jun (SJD) were probable early fall migrants, as early fall dates begin 22 Jun whereas late spring dates end 10 Jun. This species is generally not a late spring migrant. Best count was 86 in Lincoln 24 Jul (LE).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Even though a noted late spring migrant, rather late were 9 at LM and 4 at HCR 20 Jun (SJD), and a worn adult at Hultine North WPA, Clay Co, 26 Jun (JGJ). The latter is the latest ever except for 3 confirmed

fall records. Numbers were low this year, with no counts over 50; significantly higher numbers are seen into Jun. It was suggested (JGJ) that widespread rain and resulting sheet water later in May dispersed these birds, resulting in few, if any, large aggregations.

Baird's Sandpiper: Yet another species with mid-Jun dates this summer, this in surprising numbers; one was at L Minatare 19 Jun (SJD), as many as 30 were at LM 19 Jun, declining to 9 on 20 Jun (SJD), and 12 were at HCR 20 Jun (SJD). These were likely late spring migrants, but this is difficult to determine by plumage, as both late spring and early fall migrants are adults.

Pectoral Sandpiper: And again; 2 at Sinninger Basin, York Co, 12 Jun (LE) were rather late for this often-recorded-in-Jun species, and an injured adult at HCR 20 Jun (SJD) was about the 4th latest ever in spring. (I'm assuming the latter bird was headed northward when it was injured!) Earliest fall dates are in early Jul.

Stilt Sandpiper: Latest on record for spring were 6 at LM 19 Jun, 3 there 20 Jun (SJD), and an injured adult at HCR 20 Jun (SJD). Rather early for fall were 3 in Lincoln 18 Jul (LE); earliest fall date is 5 Jul.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Rather early were 21 in the eRWB 31 Jul, including 18 at North Lake Basin, Seward Co, on bare ground scraped clean during wetland restoration (JGJ). Numbers were disappointing (JGJ).

Short-billed Dowitcher: None were reported; fall arrival is generally in late Jul.

Long-billed Dowitcher: An alternate-plumaged adult at HCR 20 Jun (SJD) added to the long list of mid-Jun shorebirds found this summer. This is the latest ever for spring. Fall arrival is in late Jul; the only one reported, however, was in the eRWB 31 Jul (JGJ).

Wilson's Snipe: Breeding may occur virtually anywhere in the state, but is generally restricted to areas north of the Platte Valley and westward; sightings along White Horse Creek, Lincoln Co, 9 and 21 Jun (TJW) may have been of breeding birds, but breeding is unconfirmed in Lincoln Co. Breeding has been confirmed in the past in Lancaster Co, and so, while a rare sighting, 4 at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster Co, on 12 Jun (LE) may also have been breeding.

American Woodcock: None were reported.

Wilson's Phalarope: Probably few of the 104 birds of mixed gender at LM 19 Jun (SJD) were breeders, although breeding has been recorded there; most were likely failed- or non-breeders, as probably were 2 at HCR 20 Jun (SJD). The 350 at Chain of Lakes, northern Garden Co, 4 Jul were thought to be post-breeders, as some were juveniles, but territorial males were present also (JGJ). Six males in the eRWB 26 Jun (JGJ) were also likely non-breeders; at this time males would be incubating.

Red-necked Phalarope: Two males at LM 19 Jun (SJD) were out of place for the date; these also were likely failed breeders. This species does not breed in the state. There is a male specimen in the State Museum collected in Scotts Bluff Co 23 Jun 1916 (fide TEL).

Laughing Gull: A surprising two were reported, both alternate-plumaged adults, one at L Minatare 18 Jun (WRS,KN) and the other at LM 20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN); the latter was displaying to uninterested Franklin's Gulls. These are the 11th and 12th documented records for the state, almost all in spring and summer.

Franklin's Gull: Best count was 730 at LM 20 Jun, including a leucistic individual which was essentially white (SJD,WRS,KN). Such numbers at this date are indicative of failed breeding. More typical of fall migration, numbers at HCR had increased to 400 by 25 Jul (GH,WH).

Bonaparte's Gull: The only report was a first alternate bird at LM 19 Jun (SJD);

this is a record late spring date. There is only one mid-summer record, and earliest fall date is 19 Jul.

Ring-billed Gull: Best count was 683 at LM 20 Jun, including a leucistic bird (SJD). This is a record count for Jun.

California Gull: Best count at LM was the 21 birds there 20 Jun (SJD); ages were mixed, with 8 adults, 11 second alternates, and one first alternate. Two were at L Minatare 2 Jun (PEL,JO).

Herring Gull: An adult at LM 19 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN) is the first Nebraska record of an adult in the period 14 May-20 Sep. It was accompanied by 5 juveniles (SJD,WRS,KN).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: A first alternate-plumaged bird at LM 19 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN); this is the only record for Nebraska 30 Apr-24 Aug, although there are now some 39 total records for the state, 19 each for spring and fall.

Great Black-backed Gull: Apparently the same bird present 15-16 May was again noted at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN); it represents the 16th record for Nebraska.

Caspian Tern: Most reports were from the LM area: one near Clear Creek Marshes, Keith Co, 4 Jun (DC) and 5 at LM 20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN). This species has occurred in small numbers at LM in Jun in recent years. Rare in mid-summer elsewhere, 3 were at BOL 10 Jul (LE).

Common Tern: The only reports were of one in Scotts Bluff Co 13 Jun (KD) and 7 at LM 20 Jun (SJD); the latter is the latest spring date. There are no records 21 Jun-21 Jul.

Forster's Tern: Apparently a newly-discovered breeding location is Square L, western Cherry Co, where nesting was in progress 28 Jun (JED). Mid-summer records (14 Jun-3 Jul) away from breeding locations are few; 4 were at Burchard L SRA, Pawnee Co, 19 Jun (LE), 1-3 were at LM 19-20 Jun (SJD), 5 were at HCR 20 Jun (SJD), and 3 at BOL 27 Jun (LE). Rather late as spring migrants were 2 at HCR 13 Jun (GH,WH). Early for fall was one near Sargent 5 Jul (LR,RH).

Least Tern: Good numbers were breeding at a southeast Saunders Co gravel pit; best tally was on 29 Jun, with 24 adults, 2 juveniles, and 5+ chicks (ARy); 30+ birds were there 19 Jun and "good numbers" 31 Jul (CNK,GB). At LM 11 were present 19 Jun (SJD) and for the summer 19 nests were found and 26 chicks fledged (Gabe Wilson, fide SJD). The Platte River adjacent to Schramm SP in Sarpy Co is good for this species; 5 were at the hatchery ponds and 7 on the river 17 Jul (LE).

Black Tern: Large flocks were noted rather early in fall, indicative of failed breeding; 178 in a single flock were at LM 20 Jun (SJD,WRS,KN) and 227 were at HCR the same day (SJD). Still at their breeding site were 200 at White L, Sheridan Co, 4 Jul (JGJ).

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Nesting was observed in Nebraska City during the summer (Pam and Jerry Esser fide SJD). Best count was 15 at Cody Park, North Platte, 9 Jun (TJW). There were no new county records.

White-winged Dove: Records of this species continue unabated; one photographed in a Gretna yard was there 4-18 Jun (JA). This is the 30th state record, all since 1988.

Mourning Dove: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: The 4 reports were encouraging: singles in two different southeast Lincoln Co cedar canyons 5 and 9 Jun (TJW), one in southwest Dixon Co 7 Jul (JJ), and one in Lancaster Co 10 Jul (LE).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: A good count was the 10 in southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun (TJW).

Barn Owl: There were several reports from and near the Panhandle, including a pair with 3 young using a hole in the high dirt banks around Red Willow Res, Frontier Co, 15 Jun (Angus Garey fide TJW). Another appeared to be nesting on the spillway structure at Enders Dam, Chase Co, 2 Jul (TJW). Singles were at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 2 Jun (PEL,JO), Kiowa WMA 6 Jun (AK), and 1-2 were at CLNWR 2-4 Jul (JGJ,JT).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: Best count was 11 at a prairie-dog town along Antelope Road in Lincoln Co 2 Jun (TJW). Three of 7 seen near Gordon 9 Jun had down (CNK), and a pair with 6 young were at a prairie-dog town near Stockville 23 Jun (TJW). None were reported from the eastern half of the state.

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: This species has nested virtually statewide, but records are few. Thus of interest were fledged young at Smith L WMA 7 Jun (SJ); the species had nested here in the early 1990s also (SJ). A surprise was one flushed at Clear Creek Marshes, Keith Co, 4 Jun (DC).

Short-eared Owl: About 7 were reported, all from Panhandle grasslands, although one in Kimball Co 18 Jun was using CRP grassland; a pair had been seen at the same location a few years earlier (WRS).

Common Nighthawk: Routine reports.

Common Poorwill: Somewhat easterly were one at McKelvie NF, Cherry Co, 12 Jun (KP) and a road killed bird in Cottonwood Canyon, Lincoln Co, 22 Jun (TJW). The latter is surprisingly only the 2nd Lincoln Co record; breeding numbers may be significant in the cedar canyons in southeast Lincoln Co.

Chuck-will's-widow: This species continues at a traditional location, Wolf L, Saunders Co, where 1-2 were heard 19 and 26 Jun (TH). A belated report was of one far out of the expected range at Smith L WMA in 1995 (SJ). There is, however, a report from Thomas Co and regular sightings from the Fort Kearny area, along the Buffalo-Kearney Cos line.

Whip-poor-will: None were reported.

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: Routine reports.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Intriguing was the continuing presence from spring (9 May) through 13 Jun of a pair in a Brady yard (TJW); although nesting apparently did not occur, these birds were only the 3rd record for the western half of the state. The few other reports were from the east; no breeding was documented.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: The only report was from a Mitchell yard 16 Jul (KD), the earliest fall record ever by one day.

Rufous Hummingbird: The only report was from WSR 29 Jul (HKH). Surprisingly few hummingbirds were reported from the Panhandle.

Hummingbird sp.: An unidentified hummingbird was in a Gering yard around 7 Jun (JC, fide AK) and another south of Gering 21 Jun (AK). At this time, these could have been any of several species.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Several observers indicated that this species was conspicuously numerous this summer.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: Routine reports.

Pileated Woodpecker: Two birds were seen in the vicinity of this spring's nest site in northern FF during the first week of Jun (CNK), and one was heard in southern FF 4 Jun (BP,LP).

Western Wood-Pewee: Nesting birds were at the Gordon Cem (nest-building) 9 Jun (CNK) and at Smith L WMA the same day (CNK). Good numbers were noted on the Pine Ridge, Sioux and Dawes Cos, 12 Jun (AK).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Singles in Harlan Co 5 Jun (GH,WH) and at Oxford 10 Jul (LR,RH) were at or near the west edge of the Republican Valley range, and a singing bird at Victoria Springs SRA, Custer Co (TJW), was northwesterly.

Acadian Flycatcher: Numbers are increasing in the southeast; 4 were at ICSP 13 Jun (WRS) and 2 were in Handsome Hollow, FF, 6 Jun (WRS).

Willow Flycatcher: Good numbers of this summering empid were found in Lincoln Co, including 10 calling males near Hershey 4 Jun (TJW) and 6 along Pawnee Creek 27 Jun (LR,RH). A few others were reported statewide.

Least Flycatcher: Unexpected and virtually unprecedented was a single which called several times in southeast Saunders Co 19 Jun (CNK); there are old undocumented reports of breeding for Douglas and Richardson Cos, and a pair apparently nested in northeast Kansas in 1996.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: Routine reports.

Eastern Phoebe: A good count was 10 in southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun (TJW).

Say's Phoebe: The enigmatic appearances of this species in the northeast continued this year with one near the observer's Dixon Co yard 9 Jul (JJ); 1-2 birds have been seen in the area sporadically since 1997 (JJ).

Great Crested Flycatcher: This species has been present on the Pine Ridge as far west as Sioux Co for some time now, but generally is found in riparian habitat. Mollhoff (*Nebraska Breeding Bird Atlas*) raised the possibility that it might be adapting to non-riparian habitats ("dry upland wooded areas") as it moves westward in Nebraska. Interesting observations in this regard were of 10 birds in the cedar canyons of southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun (TJW), 3 in a "roadside thicket in the middle of a large beautiful prairie" in Franklin Co 6 Jun (LR,RH), and one in central Sheridan Co 9 Jun where there was "not much habitat" (CNK). Although these early Jun sightings might be of migrants, most birds are on territory by this time. Additional westerly sightings were of 2 at McCook 16 Jun (TJW) and 2 at Enders Res, Chase Co, 2 Jul (TJW). The latter 2 records are only the 8th and 9th in the Republican River drainage west of Harlan Co, all since 1986.

Cassin's Kingbird: One in open prairie in southern Banner Co 2 Jun (PEL,JO) may still have been migrating; in Nebraska this species usually is found in open, shrubby woodland or parkland.

Western Kingbird: An interesting discussion on NEBIRDS generally concluded that in eastern Nebraska this species is associated with man-made structures, thus occurring in towns and cities, in contrast to Eastern Kingbird, which is rural throughout the state. Perhaps the use of structures has allowed Westerns to spread eastward with minimal interference from Easterns.

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: This species may be moving northward; this summer there were 3 reports, including a nesting pair at a ball park in Filley. Apparently the birds were in Filley in 2003 (fide BP,LP), and this year were first noted 9 Jun (BP,LP) and a nest discovered 12 Jun (JK,SK). Last report was 25 Jun (NP); no information came to hand regarding nest success, but the male was seen to be

“out playing in right field” 13 Jun (EB). This is the 10th nesting record for Nebraska. Two other reports were of singles near North Platte 4 Jun (JJ) and an adult male at Eppley Airfield, Omaha, 25-27 Jul (JT,MA), where a female or immature had been seen in 2003 (JT). These are the 19th and 20th Jun-Jul records for Nebraska without nesting noted.

Loggerhead Shrike: A nest with 5-6 naked young was found in York Co 19 Jun (LR,RH).

Bell's Vireo: This species is numerous in central Nebraska: 15 were in Valley Co 13 Jun (LR,RH); 12 calling males, 3 nests, 2 with eggs, were near Hershey 4 Jun (TJW); and 10 were counted in southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun (TJW).

Yellow-throated Vireo: A good count was 6 in Douglas and Sarpy Cos 6 Jun (WRS), and northerly were 2 at Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, 18 Jun (BFH).

Plumbeous Vireo: Marking the end of spring migration and start of fall were singles at WSR 5 Jun and 26 Jul (HKH); these are the latest spring and earliest fall dates for migrants (there is no breeding habitat at WSR).

Warbling Vireo: Routine reports.

Red-eyed Vireo: An excellent count was the 24 in Howard Co 8 Jun (LR,RH).

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: None were reported.

Black-billed Magpie: A group of 7 at Old Stage Road, Scotts Bluff Co, 17 Jul were the most the observer had seen together for some time (AK).

American Crow: None were seen during the summer at Wolf L, Saunders Co, for the first time in 29 years, prompting the observer to invoke the possibility of West Nile Virus as a causative agent (TH).

Horned Lark: Juveniles with adults in Saunders and Lancaster Cos 10 Jul (LE) were probably second broods for this usually early nester.

Purple Martin: First fall staging was noted in Lincoln, where “hundreds” were present 27 Jul (CR). Breeding occurs in the Republican Valley west to Benkelman, where 5 were at a martin house 7 Jun (MB); it is common in Culbertson, where it has nested since 1965 (JSt). Rare from about Ogallala westward in the Platte Valley, a good sighting was one at Ogallala 4 Jul (JSt).

Tree Swallow: Nestlings were seen at Brady 9 Jun (TJW). This species has nested at Smith L WMA since 1993 (SJ).

Violet-green Swallow: Routine reports.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Apparently a recent colonizer in Scotts Bluff Co, one was at Kiowa WMA 17 Jun (AK), and an excellent fall aggregation of 250-300 was there Jul 28 (KD).

Cliff Swallow: Routine reports.

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Black-capped Chickadee: Singles were noted in a few places where they had been absent, suggesting a gradual recovery from the depressed numbers reported during 2003-2004. One at Walnut Grove Park, Omaha, 12-14 Jun was the first there this year (JWH); only one was found in 100 miles of coverage in Lancaster Co 27 Jun (LE); and the first in the observer's Dixon Co yard since Mar was one there 30 Jun (JJ). Good numbers were noted, however, in the southeast Lincoln Co cedar canyons 22 Jun (TJW).

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: A juvenile was with 2 adults at McKelvie NF, Cherry Co, 12 Jun (KP); this is the first report since breeding was first noted there in 1980.

White-breasted Nuthatch: The subspecific identity of one at WSR 26 Jul (HKH)

was not determined, but would be of considerable interest. At this location, which does have breeding habitat, eastern birds which are spreading along the Platte Valley may occur, or a fall disperser from the western population in the Pine Ridge might occur.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Routine reports.

Brown Creeper: One was seen in the northwest part of the MRET (CNK), about a quarter of a mile from the 23 May sighting in the area; hopefully this indicates at least 2 pairs might be summering there.

Rock Wren: The cedar canyons in southeast Lincoln Co again provided interesting sightings, this time of good numbers of Rock Wrens; best count was of 4 birds 26 Jun and 2 nests were located 22 Jun (TJW).

Carolina Wren: The small westerly population at HCR continues, with singles in the Methodist Cove area 17 and 27 Jun (GH,WH). Adults with 3 young in the observer's Bellevue yard 6 Jun were building a new nest (KCR).

House Wren: A veteran observer at Bellevue (RG) sent the following: "I remember when you could hear them singing all over Bellevue in the summer. I have even banded as many as 50 just in my yard--no more. I'm lucky if I band 3." This is an example of the importance of keeping track of numbers of common birds; numbers banded is also a good way to track populations (assuming the obvious variables are recognized).

Sedge Wren: Jun reports are few; also somewhat northwesterly were 2 at Scotia Canal WMA, Valley Co, 13 Jun (LR,RH). More usual are singing birds in late Jul and Aug; 4 at Spikerush WMA, York Co, 25 Jul (LR,RH) were the first for fall.

Marsh Wren: Southeasternmost were 2 at Nathan's L, Washington Co, 21 Jul (JT), 2-5 at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster & Saunders Cos, 10-31 Jul (LE), and one in Cass Co 31 Jul (CNK,GB), the latter possibly an early migrant. Summer reports in the southeast are rare.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Exceptionally early was one at WSR 26 Jul (HKH); this is only the 2nd Jul record ever. Usual arrival is in mid-Sep.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Reports from the edge of the eastern range were of one of the outlying population near the Orleans Republican River bridge 10 Jul (GH,WH), and singles in Lincoln 24-25 Jul (LE,TEL).

Eastern Bluebird: A total of 67 had fledged from boxes at ADF by 31 Jul (LF,CF).

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Swainson's Thrush: Last of the spring migrants was at WSR 2 Jun (HKH).

Wood Thrush: A good count was 14 in Sarpy and Douglas Cos 6 Jun (WRS). This species is sometimes found in surprisingly small patches of woods; one such was at Verdon L SRA, Richardson Co, 18 Jul (CC).

American Robin: An aggregation of 56 mostly young birds at Victoria Springs SRA, Custer Co, 19 Jul 2003 (LR,RH) was about on schedule for fall flock formation.

Gray Catbird: A nest with 5 eggs was found near Hershey 4 Jun (TJW).

Northern Mockingbird: An excellent count was the 6 on a BBS route in southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun (TJW). The other reports, of 4 birds, were from grasslands in the southeast.

Brown Thrasher: Nests with eggs were reported 4-12 Jun (TJW,DP,JP), and first hatchlings 2 Jun (TJW).

Curve-billed Thrasher: The bird at the Frimann Ranch, Sioux Co, continued its lengthy stay, 23 months as of this writing (LFr,AK). This summer it fed Common Grackle and American Robin fledglings (LFr).

European Starling: Routine reports.

Cedar Waxwing: A nest was found 25 ft up in a Lincoln sycamore 11 Jun; adults were feeding nestlings there 27 Jun, having survived a severe storm 13 Jun (LE).

Tennessee Warbler: Last spring migrant was at DeSoto NWR in southeast Washington Co 2 Jun (JT); latest spring date is 11 Jun.

Northern Parula: Best count was 5 at FF 6 Jun (WRS).

Yellow Warbler: Excellent numbers were found in Lincoln Co; 15-20 singing males were north of Hershey 4 Jun (TJW) and 43 were counted along Pawnee Creek 27 Jun (LR,RH). A female was carrying food in Clay Co 26 Jun (JGJ).

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: None were reported; this species breeds on the Pine Ridge and in the Wildcat Hills.

Yellow-throated Warbler: One at MRET 23 Jun was the 3rd consecutive year one was seen there mid-late Jun (CNK). Breeding there has not yet been confirmed, but seems likely.

Cerulean Warbler: Extensive surveys of likely breeding habitat in eastern Nebraska yielded a total of 5-7 singing males, only one of which, a bird at Hummel Park, Omaha, appeared to be accompanied by a female (WRS,BFH). The female could not be located there 23 Jun, however (CNK). This was the 3rd consecutive year a singing male has been at Hummel Park, and at least 2 observers (LP,WRS) were fairly sure that two males might have been there. One at MRET did not stay long (CNK,WRS), but others at ICSP, FF, and Ashford Scout Camp, Thurston Co, sang persistently into Jun (WRS,BFH). No breeding evidence was obtained at any of these locations. Habitat features common to all locations were (1) a significant stream or creek and (2) a flat area with very tall trees, species unimportant, usually adjacent to steep wooded hillsides.

Black-and-white Warbler: One along the Niobrara River at the north edge of McKelvie NF, Cherry Co, 12 Jun (KP) was only the 4th Jun record for Cherry Co.

American Redstart: Routine reports.

Prothonotary Warbler: None were reported, after several spring reports.

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Summering numbers were better than average: one was at FF 6 Jun (WRS), 3 at ICSP 13 Jun (WRS, JSt), and one at Schramm SP 17 Jul (LE).

Kentucky Warbler: As with Louisiana Waterthrush, summering numbers were good, with 3 in southeast Washington Co 6 Jun (WRS), 7 at ICSP 13 Jun (WRS,JSt), and one still singing at Schramm SP 17 Jul (LE).

Common Yellowthroat: Routine reports.

Hooded Warbler: Despite the surprising 7 reports in spring, none were reported during Jun-Jul.

Wilson's Warbler: Earliest ever for fall by 5 days and first ever Jul record was one at WSR 29 Jul (HKH).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Easternmost was one in Wheeler Co 4 Jul (LR,RH), about at the eastern edge of the summer range.

Summer Tanager: Although present at ICSP in good numbers in Jun (WRS), the only other report was of one at FF 26 Jul (DB); this species has begun to summer there in recent years.

Scarlet Tanager: Routine reports.

Western Tanager: Best count was 5 in northern Sioux Co 12 Jun, including a male in cottonwoods surrounded by grasslands (AK).

Spotted Towhee: Routine reports.

Eastern Towhee: Westerly was one in southeast Lincoln Co 5 Jun, where most are

Spotted (TJW). This appears to be the first record of an Eastern Towhee for Lincoln Co; presumably it looked like an Eastern, but most Nebraska birds are at least somewhat mixed genotypically.

Green-tailed Towhee: Last spring migrant was in a Sidney yard 1 Jun (AS); latest spring dates are in early Jun.

Cassin's Sparrow: Good numbers were found in the southwest, as might be expected with the dry conditions prevailing there. About 20 were reported in all, including 8 west of Enders Res in Chase Co on 20 Jun (MB) and 5 in southeast Grant Co 2 Jul (TJW). All were in sandsage grasslands, north to the CLNWR area (BW,DW,JT).

Chipping Sparrow: Numbers continue to increase in the HCR area (GH,WH); summering numbers are fewest in the southwest.

Brewer's Sparrow: This species is adapting to CRP grassland within its western Nebraska range; 2 were noted in such habitat in Kimball Co 18 Jun (WRS).

Field Sparrow: This species was found to be quite numerous in Lincoln Co during the summer; a BBS route in southeast Lincoln Co found it on "most stops" (TJW), and 3 pairs and a nest with 5 young were found north of Hershey along the Platte River 4 Jun (TJW). Field Sparrows are rare in summer west of Keith Co.

Vesper Sparrow: Numbers appear to be increasing in the eRWB in recent years, although it is "by no means common" (JGJ).

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Good numbers were reported in the Panhandle, including "hundreds" north of Oshkosh 12 Jul (JT). None were reported east of Lincoln Co, where 3 males were seen 25 Jun (TJW).

Grasshopper Sparrow: This species is doing well in most of Nebraska. Good counts were the "dozens" in prairie in southeast Franklin Co 6 Jun (LR,RH) and 13 in southwest Custer Co 17 Jul (LR,RH).

Henslow's Sparrow: The only reports were from locations where a few have been noted in recent years: 1-2 at Boyer Chute NWR, Washington Co, 18 Jun (JT), and 2 at SCP 3 Jun (KP).

Song Sparrow: Rare as far west in the Platte Valley as Lincoln and Keith Cos, but suggestive of increasing numbers at least in Lincoln Co, 2 were singing north of Hershey 4 Jun (TJW) and singles were along White Horse and Pawnee Creeks in Lincoln Co 9 Jun (TJW).

Swamp Sparrow: This species is scattered throughout central Nebraska in cattail marshes during summer. Among few Lincoln Co reports were 1-2 singing males along White Horse Creek 9 and 21 Jun (TJW). At the northwest edge of the Nebraska summer range, breeding occurred at Smith L WMA in 1998 and 2000; singing males have been there since 1997 (SJ).

Harris's Sparrow: A singing bird in the observer's Dixon Co yard 23 Jun was not as much of a surprise as might be thought; one was there 8 Jun 2003 (JJ), very likely the same disoriented bird. This is the 6th Nebraska record in the period 23 Jun-13 Aug.

Dark-eyed Junco: One that was seen inside a Walmart store in Omaha through winter and spring was still present 22 Jun; it was eating spilled seed at the bird feed area of the store (DSt). The observer (DSt) wondered why we couldn't "all go to Walmart to bird, just like we do for everything else"?

McCown's Longspur: None were reported.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The only report was of 4 in Kimball Co 18 Jun, where numbers were lower than usual (WRS).

Northern Cardinal: Routine reports.

- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Numbers in the west in recent springs have increased, but summer reports are still scarce. Two singles were found, one in Monroe Canyon 2 Jun (PEL,JO) and another with a Black-headed Grosbeak family at a Mitchell feeder 24 Jul (KD).
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** At the eastern edge of the summer range were singles near Gibbon 3 Jul (LR,RH) and at Edison 10 Jul (LR,RH), the latter a male.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Routine reports.
- Lazuli Bunting:** As with Rose-breasted Grosbeaks west, Lazuli Buntings east have become routine in spring, but are rarer in summer. One well-studied in York Co 19 Jun showed no signs of hybridization (LR,RH).
- Indigo Bunting:** Individuals showing no sign of hybridization are uncommon in the Panhandle; singles were near Chadron 22 Jun (SA) and in southern Scotts Bluff Co 17 Jul (AK).
- Dickcissel:** Westernmost, but within the summer range, were 4 singing at Brady 4 Jun (TJW).
- Bobolink:** An excellent count was the 125 on a BBS route in southeast Cherry Co 8 Jun (CNK). There were a few southerly reports: 4 at SCP 3 Jun (KP) and 2 there 4 Jul (LE), 3 in southeast Saunders Co 19 Jun (CNK), and 1-3 at Burchard L SRA, Pawnee Co, 19-22 Jun (LE,RE). Plowing of CRP grassland in southwest Dixon Co reduced numbers there (JJ).
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Routine reports.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Westerly, but at a regular summer location, were "a few" in the White Horse Creek meadows north of the North Platte airport 2-21 Jun (TJW).
- Western Meadowlark:** An indication of the abundance of this species in the Sandhills were the counts of 247 and 212 on BBS routes in Cherry and Sheridan Cos in early Jun (CNK).
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Southeasterly were 10 at Jack Sinn WMA, Lancaster & Saunders Cos, 27 Jun (LE).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** Routine reports.
- Common Grackle:** Routine reports.
- Great-tailed Grackle:** Reports are now statewide; fewest reports are from the Sandhills, where 2 pairs were nest-building at Smith L WMA 7-9 Jun (SJ,CNK). Best count was 30+ along White Horse Creek near the North Platte airport 9 Jun (TJW).
- Brown-headed Cowbird:** Routine reports.
- Orchard Oriole:** A nest in York Co 19 Jun contained 5 eggs and a cowbird egg (LR,RH).
- Baltimore Oriole:** An adult was feeding nestlings at FF 20 Jun (ARy).
- Bullock's Oriole:** An interesting mix of plumages was provided by the 8 birds at a Mitchell feeder 11 Jul (KD): 2 adult males, 2 adult females, a juvenile, 2 first-year males, and an odd bird that might have been a blackish female or first-year male. One at the CLNWR headquarters 12 Jul (JT) was the easternmost reported.
- Scott's Oriole:** What would be Nebraska's 6th report (only one of the previous 5 documented) was one in Kearney 29 Jun (CD); details were provided and have been forwarded to the NOU Records Committee.
- House Finch:** Routine reports.
- Red Crossbill:** At least one was at McKelvie NF, Cherry Co, 12 Jun (KP); summer reports from this area are few.
- Pine Siskin:** None were reported; few were reported in spring as well.
- American Goldfinch:** Routine reports.
- House Sparrow:** Routine reports.